

BARBER



HOME

LYNNEBEC

**EMBRACE THE STRANGE
MOVEMENT WORKSHOP**

Our collection, your place



For this edition of Barber Home, LYNNEBEC will be hosting a surreal Dada-esque movement workshop. Inspired by Jean (Hans) Arp's 'Man Seen by a Flower' (1958) from the Barber collection, the workshop will offer a space to explore our own physicality in the current nonsensical landscape.

Responding to Arp's working processes, LYNNEBEC will embrace the strange and celebrate chaos by using chance and risk as a choreographing technique. We invite you to join this nurturing space for our bodies, to become comfortable with the idea of change and randomness and to encourage growth within ourselves.

LYNNEBEC (Jessica Barber & Catherine Butler) are a multidisciplinary performance duo based in Birmingham. They create site-specific, highly interactive, ensemble-led projects for outdoor or found performance spaces. Their work is a hybrid of physical theatre, dance, circus and visual arts, and focuses on live audience interaction in performance.

Illustration of Jean (Hans) Arp's 'Man Seen by a Flower' (1958) by Flora Kay (2020).

LYNNEBEC

BARBER HOME

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UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Was ist Dada?

Dada, Dada, Dada... Dada, a word that seizes the imagination and draws you in. Dada was a call to arms, a way of thinking.

Dada emerged during the atrocities of the First World War, and was an artistic movement formed in reaction to the needless horrors and folly of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. In 1916, in Zurich, disillusioned artists and poets came together to reject the repressive social structures and unchallenged conformity of culture and thought which they believed had started the brutal and nihilistic war. It was an artistic movement dedicated to making art, poetry and performance out of 'the Absurd', and challenging convention. Brandishing scissors and glue they made collages and photomontages, wrote nonsensical poems, explored childish games, experimented with theatre and performance that mocked politicians, satirised the media and ridiculed nationalism.

'Dada'... it's more of a nonsensical utterance than a word. Supposedly the name was either chosen at random by stabbing a knife into a dictionary or, more probably, chosen consciously for the variety of its connotations in different languages – Russian for "yes, yes" or French for "hobbyhorse". Primitive in sound, like a child babbling, 'Dada' implied a reset, a new beginning for art.

Its anti-bourgeois artists aimed to destroy traditional values of

art and culture, challenging the notion of artistic 'talent', instead championing chance and chaos as artistic strategies for making. Chance meant anarchy - it rejected the rules of the society. It meant restoring art to something deep, personal and mystical, offering a new vision of the world.

Using unconventional materials along with chance, they instilled their work with spontaneity and satire, and reimaged what art making could be. Aesthetics were considered secondary to ideas and concepts. 'For us, art is not an end in itself,' wrote Dada poet and founder Hugo Ball, (1886- 1927) 'but it is an opportunity for the true perception and criticism of the times that we live in.' Dada artists both embraced and criticised modernity, using and referencing modern technologies, films, newspapers and advertising in their practices.

Painter and sculptor Jean (Hans) Arp (1886-1966) was one of the founders of Dada, and harnessed the power of chance to challenge man's subordination of nature. Arp celebrated chance and chaos as fundamental rules of the natural world. He wished to remove the ego of the narcissistic artist and his unreasonable desire to be separate from nature. 'I wanted to find another order, another value for man in nature. He should no longer be the measure of all things, nor should everything be compared with him, but, on the contrary, all things, and man as well, should be like nature, without measure.' (*Jours Effeuillés, Poèmes, Essais, Souvenirs* (1966), p.183)

Arp played with random form compositions in his drawings and paintings. Ripping, tearing and cutting shapes in paper, he would let the shapes fall randomly onto a surface, pasting them where they landed. He said that his work did not require intellectual interpretation, that the shapes did not refer to existing shapes and forms, but were new: nature, born from him in the same way a tree bears fruit.

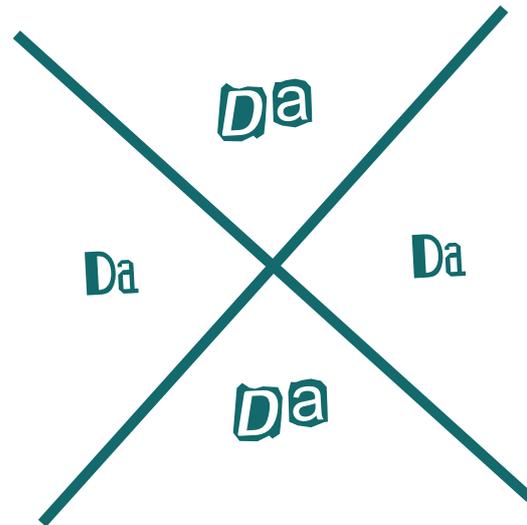
His most evocative expression of humanity's relationship with nature came in a series of biomorphic (abstract but evoking natural form) sculptures he called *Human Concretions*; the Barber's *'Man seen by a Flower'* (1958) is a perfect example. He created these works by sanding away at a plaster model using a semi-unconscious process known as automatism, embracing the subconscious as a tool for chance and subversion. 'I worked until enough of my life had flowed into its body.' These biomorphic forms are suggestive of living organisms, feeling alive and fecund, and they evoke the chaos and fluidity of natural forces.

Dada spanned from 1916 until the mid-1920s, became an international movement in New York, Cologne, Hanover and Paris, and formed the basis of Surrealism. Dada's tentacles have spread across culture, inspiring 70s punk imagery, the absurdist humour of Monty Python and the song writing of David Bowie.

Dada created a new, shocking and anarchic way of looking at the world, challenging the ideas of concrete universal truths.

Notable Dadaists

Jean (Hans) Arp (1886-1966)
Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)
Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948)
Hannah Höch (1889-1978)



Dadaist Activity

Inspired by the work of Dada poet Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), cut out words from a newspaper, place the cuttings into a bag. Shake the bag and then let the cuttings fall onto a surface. Using the words where they land write a nonsensical poem.

Does the juxtaposition of the words engender new meanings?

Can you make meaning out of the meaningless?

LYNNEBEC WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

CONNECTIVITY TASK/MEDITATION

Before beginning, read this [article](#) about connectivity

Find a quiet space and somewhere to sit comfortably. Place your hands on your lap or a table in front of you with your palms facing upwards.

Focus on your breathing, notice your chest expanding and compressing. Read the following instructions and then try and close your eyes if it feels safe to do so. You can just lower the gaze if you prefer. *

Breath in slowly for 2 counts, hold for 2 and breathe out for 2.
Breath in slowly for 4 counts, hold for 4 and breathe out for 4.
Breath in slowly for 6 counts, hold for 4 and breathe out for 6.
Breath in slowly for 8 counts, hold for 4 and breathe out for 8.
Take one final big breath in and out.

Imagine your fingers are extending with powerful beams of connectivity that can link you with loved ones, friends or safe spaces that you can't reach at this moment in time.

After a minute or so, open your eyes keeping the gaze low and soft until your eyes adjust.

DANCING ON MY OWN

Make sure you have a clear space in your room, look around for any trip hazards and get ready to groove!

Put on your favourite track that reminds you of home OR 'Dancing on My Own' by Robyn (used in the workshop).

Start dancing like nobody's watching!

Warm up each part of your body but give it some love, a gentle pat or squeeze. Don't forget your hands, arms, tummy, knees.

Whilst moving and grooving, move around to a different part of the room.

Think about parts of the room that you love, where you don't look at, where the room sparkles, where it feels darker.

*Do not participate in this breathing exercise if you are pregnant, have a medical conditions or any other reason from your GP that would make this kind of breath work unsuitable for you. You can still do the meditation and visualisation without the breath work.

DICE ACTIVITY

Before beginning the task, have this [link](#) ready in another tab and put a funky playlist on!

We're going to look at chance! This was a big part of Arp's practice, through this technique we are removing the artist (the judging voice or the ego) from letting us determine how we can make work. This task was also inspired by Merce Cunningham, a contemporary choreographer who used chance a lot in his practice too. Both practitioners used chance in their practice which prompted bold contrasting techniques in their style.

- Body - Label 6 moves that use your body (in a way that feels safe for you) 1 to 6, e.g. 1: roll the head, 2: shrug the shoulders. Go through this routine a couple of times to get familiar. Try and create a loop in your body to help you remember. This can be done by standing up or sitting down, whatever feels comfortable for you.
- Groovy Moves - Now we are going to make a random sequence for these moves using the dice. Using a dice (virtual or not), roll this 8 times. For each roll you will write the number of the move on a piece of paper, e.g. if I rolled a 5 I would write the number 5 and perform, followed by 6. Write and perform until you have 8 numbers, e.g. 463122
- Become familiar with doing this count of 8 and remembering the order in which the moves go.
- Give the space some love - Now we are going to perform it for the different parts of the room you're in: your favourite part, a part of the room you never use, a part you use all the time, the smallest nook, the bit that has the most sparkle in it.
- In the Spirit of Dada - Which object do you think enjoyed your performance the most? Give it a little tap and say hello. Now ask that object if they'd like to be in a duet. If they do, great! If they don't, that's fine. Ask other objects in your room, find out who'd like to be your dance partner.
- Duet Time - Put on a silly track and dance with your object using your sequence.
- How does using this object change your movements? How can you adapt?

WORKSHOP RESOURCES



Jae Tallawah is a ferociously brummy, non-binary, neurodiverse music maker, poet, visual artist and space curator. Their work focuses on the ways that fusing colours and sounds can facilitate holistic 360° experiences. Jae is driven by a desire to curate spaces and experiences that make people feel seen, encouraged and healed. Jae describes their music style as the anxious love child of Erykah Badu, Lady Leshurr and Azealia Banks. Jae makes affirmation anthems and depression bops. They are inspired by the textures and harmonies of gospel music and the rhythm, form and flow of dub poetry.

LINKS TO JAE TALLAWAH'S [INSTAGRAM](#) & [MUSIC](#)

Merce Cunningham, considered the most influential choreographer of the 20th century, was a many-sided artist. He was a dance-maker, a fierce collaborator, a chance taker, a boundless innovator, a film producer, and a teacher. During his 70 years of creative practice, Cunningham's exploration forever changed the landscape of dance, music, and contemporary art.

MORE ABOUT [CUNNINGHAM](#) AND HIS [TECHNIQUE](#)

Sara Wookey is an international dance artist and research associate with the Centre for Dance Research and Tate Modern, she specializes in dance in the museum. Her work has been in collaboration with, among others, the Hammer Museum, REDCAT, New Museum, and the Barbican and is now part of the permanent collection at the Van Abbe museum.

[READ SARA WOOKEY'S EXPLORATION OF CONNECTION IN A TIME OF ISOLATION](#)

WORKSHOP MUSIC PLAYLIST > [LINK](#)

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